



Braintree Town Council

Committee of Ways & Means

One JFK Memorial Drive
Braintree, Massachusetts 02184

MEMBERS

Meredith Boericke, Chairwoman
Charles Ryan, Vice-Chair
Donna Connors, Member
Julia Flaherty, Member
Steven Sciascia, Member

MINUTES

April 7, 2020

A meeting of the Committee of Ways & Means was held Remote via Zoom Webinar, on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 6:00p.m.

Councilor Boericke was in the Chair.

Clerk of the Council, Susan M. Cimino conducted the roll call.

All votes to be taken by Roll Call Vote.

Present: Meredith Boericke, Chairwoman
Charles Ryan, Vice-Chair
Donna Connors, Member
Julia Flaherty, Member
Steven Sciascia, Member

Also Present: Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff
Ed Spellman, Finance Director
Dr. Frank Hackett, Superintendent of Schools
Christine Stickney, Director Planning & Community Development
James Arsenault, DPW Director
Ben Hulke, Assistant DPW Director
Lou Dutton, Superintendent of Water & Sewer

The meeting was opened with the pledge of allegiance to the flag followed by a moment of silence for all those serving in our armed services, past and present.

Approval of Minutes

- January 29, 2020

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to Approve Minutes of January 29, 2020

Second: by Councilor Connors

Roll Call Vote: For (5—Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

Old Business

- **19 044 Mayor: To Approve the purchase and resale of an affordable-housing unit at Turtle Crossing and the expenditure of funds for that purpose or take up any action relative thereto (WITHDRAWN)**

Chairwoman Boericke asked if there was a motion to take off the table Order 19 044.

Councilor Ryan made a motion to take Council Order 19 044 off the table.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to Take off the Table Order 19 044

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

Roll Call Vote: For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

Councilor Boericke gave an update from John Goldrosen, Assistant Town Solicitor. He stated: Order 19-044 can be WITHDRAWN by the Town Council. The owner of the "affordable" Turtle Crossing unit who had been threatened with foreclosure has come to an agreement with her lender to modify the terms of the mortgage loan. Therefore, foreclosure is no longer imminent, and there is no need for the Town to purchase the unit from her in order to preserve it as an affordable unit.

Chairwoman Boericke stated there is no further action required.

New Business

- **20 032 Mayor: FY2020 Supplemental Appropriation #2 (Master Plan) or take up any action relative thereto (PUBLIC HEARING at Full Council)**

Councilor Boericke, Chairwoman of the Committee of Ways & Means stated I feel this item should be tabled at this time. Though many of us feel a Master Plan is vital for the town's future. There will be a lot of planning necessary for the recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak. I have heard from constituents who are worried about how to pay for utilities and property taxes. This is pressing with the pandemic effecting all of our revenue streams. We may need this money to deal with the ramifications of COVID-19. I feel we should table this until we get a full picture of what our finances look like.

Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff stated the Mayor's office respectfully ask the committee move forward with the request of this transfer of funds. This is something the residents have been asking for for some time. This is something the Mayor indicated is a priority. The Mayor would like for this to move forward and not be delayed.

Christine Stickney stated one of the items that came from the Comprehensive Zoning Project was the general public wanted a Master Plan. We have been working with Mayor Kokoros to try to structure something to get it underway. The first part we have ready is the Visioning aspect and the funding is there which is left from the Comprehensive Zoning Project about \$63,000 that could cover that portion of the work to be done. From what comes out of the Visioning we would use for the rest of the project.

Councilor Connors was asking where we are with our free cash balance.

Ed Spellman, Finance Director stated we currently have \$9,340,813. If this supplemental were to go through it would bring the total down to \$9, 205,304.

Councilor Flaherty asked for the free cash totals for the last five years.

Ed Spellman stated I can get that to you. I do not have it right in front of me at this time.

Councilor Ryan stated I share Councilor Boericke's concerns on the finances given the current situation there will be a lot of fiscal impact. I am not opposed and I heard the residents of Braintree want a Master Plan. I think if we move this forward tonight we say we want answers on the fiscal impact this is going to have.

Councilor Boericke, Chairwoman of the Committee of Ways & Means stated I would just like a thorough understanding of our financial situation.

Nicole Taub stated we are trying to maintain operations as best we can and continue to move forward and this Master Plan is a big part of that.

Councilor Connors thinks at this point it would be detrimental to hold back the Master Plan.

Councilor Boericke stated I just think it is appropriate to ask for projections.

Councilor Ryan read the motion for favorable recommendation to the full Council.

MOTION:

That the amount of \$64,492.20 be transferred from the Planning and Community Development Department Updating Zoning Ordinance article and \$135,507.80 be transferred from FY 2019 Certified Free Cash for a total of \$200,000.00 to Planning and Community Development Department Master Plan article.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 032

Second: by Councilor Connors

Roll Call Vote: For (3 – Connors, Flaherty, Ryan), Against (2 – Boericke, Sciascia), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- **20 033 Mayor FY2020 Supplemental Appropriation #3 (PFAS Removal-Water Treatment Plant) up any action relative thereto (PUBLIC HEARING at Full Council)**

Councilor Connors asked when are we required to start monitoring and getting our PFAS under 20ppm?

Lou Dutton stated it becomes law at the end of December 2020, so we were hoping to have it in place by the fall. The option we came up with is granular activated carbon

James Arsenault, DPW Director stated the system that we chose we can get it up and running in time. This is replacing filter media which can be done much quicker.

Councilor Ryan asked what the PFAS numbers we have right now.

Lou Dutton stated the last sample in January the PFAS was 23.

Councilor Ryan asked what will this proposed system bring it down to.

Lou Dutton stated it is unknown.

Councilor Ryan asked what is the hope that the \$693,000 will bring it down to?

Lou Dutton stated we are hoping it gets down to 10 or below.

Councilor Ryan asked what is the new regulation going to be?

Lou Dutton stated right now 20.

Councilor Connors stated concerns over cost comparisons of GAC vs PAC.

James Arsenault, DPW Director stated there is a good chance the numbers could be lower than what was submitted.

Lou Dutton stated we may be able to stretch the filters out longer and they work as we need them to get to the lower PFAS numbers.

Councilor Connors stated pros and cons of both systems would be good to have that data.

Councilor Sciascia asked about the Environmental Partners submitted report.

Nicole Taub explained the memo from Environmental Partners explained all three were viable options and explained why the change to go with the GAC and the filters.

James Arsenault explained it is just replacing a filter with a different type of material. It is an existing system. It is not changing anything.

Councilor Sciascia stated is what I am hearing is that this is the only option.

James Arsenault explained it is not the only option but it is the best option for an old system to get to the PFAS numbers quickly. The earlier we get this done the better the water quality for the residents of Braintree.

Councilor Flaherty stated the understanding is in the long run the costs are all about the same.

Councilor Boericke stated in her opinion this is a health and safety issue for our clean drinking water.

Councilor Ryan made a motion for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 033

MOTION: That the amount of \$693,020 be transferred from FY2019 certified Water Sewer Retained Earnings to Water Department Water Treatment Plant PFAS Removal System article.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 033

Second: by Councilor Sciascia

Roll Call Vote: For (3 – Boericke, Flaherty, Ryan), Against (1 - Connors), Absent (0), Abstain (1 - Sciascia)

- **20 035 Mayor: Motion to Accept Massachusetts General Law c. 59 s. 5C ½ (additional real estate exemption) or take up any action relative thereto**

Nicole Taub stated there was significant concerns raised earlier this year with strain that tax obligations place on our senior population and that perhaps the existing statutory exemptions were not sufficient to address those concerns and the strains placed on those individuals.

Robert Brinkmann, Deputy Assessor stated the mayor had asked the department to review possible options. This gave us the most flexibility to allow the Mayor's office to recommend a percentage increase. This gives the Council the opportunity to increase or decrease the 20% depending on the interest.

Councilor Ryan asked if this is contingent upon the debt exclusion vote or is this independent of that? Nicole Taub stated this would be independent of that. This was an initiative of the mayors separate and apart from the debt exclusion.

Councilor Boericke asked if this is in place for 3 years once it passes.

Robert Brinkmann, Deputy Assessor stated that is correct. After 3 years you can vote to rescind it but you can change the percentage each year.

Councilor Ryan made a motion for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 035.

MOTION: That the Town accept Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5C 1/2, which provides for an additional real estate exemption for taxpayers who are granted personal exemptions on their domiciles under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, including certain blind persons, veterans, surviving spouses and seniors, and provide an additional exemption up to twenty percent (20%) of the personal exemption, to be effective for exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2020.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 035

Second: by Councilor Sciascia

Roll Call Vote: For (5—Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- **20 037 Superintendent of Schools: Statement of Interest (SOI) with the MSBA for Braintree High School or take up any action relative thereto**

Dr. Frank Hackett, Superintendent of Schools stated this is authorization for him to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) for Braintree High School. This does not include any type of funding commitment to proceed if in fact the MSBA invites us to eligibility.

Councilor Ryan made a motion for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 037.

BRAINTREE HIGH SCHOOL MSBA Statement of Interest

Braintree Town Council MSBA Required Vote Language - April 7, 2020

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 7, 2020 prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Town Council of Braintree, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 7, 2020 for Braintree High School located at 128 Town Street, Braintree, Massachusetts, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future: Priority #3: Prevention of the loss of accreditation; Priority #5: Replacement, renovation, or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility; Priority #7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Braintree or the Braintree School Department to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 037

Second: by Councilor Sciascia

Roll Call Vote: For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:06p.m. by Roll Call Vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan M. Cimino
Clerk of the Council

Documents provided for Meeting

- Minutes of January 29, 2020
- 20 032 Mayor: FY2020 Supplemental Appropriation #2 (Master Plan) or take up any action relative thereto (PUBLIC HEARING at Full Council)
- 20 033 Mayor FY2020 Supplemental Appropriation #3 (PFAS Removal-Water Treatment Plant) up any action relative thereto (PUBLIC HEARING at Full Council)
- 20 035 Mayor: Motion to Accept Massachusetts General Law c. 59 s. 5C ½ (additional real estate exemption) or take up any action relative thereto
- 20 037 Superintendent of Schools: Statement of Interest (SOI) with the MSBA for Braintree High School or take up any action relative thereto